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'Nothing wrong with BR1M'

> Similar cash aid initiative exists for citizens in Saudi Arabia, says Najib

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak said the (Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) is not a form of bribery for the government to gain support from the public.

In refuting allegations by former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Najib said the government was sincere in assisting the needy when it introduced the programme.

He also drew comparison between BR1M to a similar programme introduced in Saudi Arabia, where the government opened bank accounts for its citizens and deposited cash assistance to help families cope with financial burdens.

"When Mahathir said BR1M is a bribe, what is the difference between BR1M and the assistance given by the Arab government?"

"They never said the assistance by the Saudi Arabian government is a bribe. But when we do it, people say we are giving bribes.

"BR1M is not a bribe, it is meant to help the rakyat who are in need. We never said that you need to support our BN national (BN) if you receive BR1M, nor that BR1M is only given to BN's supporters," he said at the launch of Residensi Kerinchi in Lembah Pantai yesterday.

Najib also said the government did not make a wrong move when it introduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2009, despite public outcry, adding that even oil-rich Saudi Arabia has plans to introduce the same tax scheme soon.

"If Saudi Arabia wants to introduce GST, there must be a valid reason."

On the increase of petrol prices, he said fuel prices in the Arab country had increased by 90% despite its vast crude oil deposits.

He said every measure adopted by the government was meant to serve the public, adding that the rakyat should not be confused or misguided by wrong information.

Meanwhile, Bernama reported Najib as saying the Khasanah Kerinchi project, that accommodates 472 households, is a reflection of the government's effort to improve the future of the people.

He said since 1971, the residents have lived in dilapidated 300sq ft to 400sq ft four-storey flats of Kampung Kerinchi.

He said they were now able to live in 900sq ft condominium units with a swimming pool, surau, playground and other amenities without payment under a trade-off concept.

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